

Rhode Island State Planning Council
Approved Minutes of Thursday, November 7, 2013 Meeting
William E. Powers Building
Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

I. ATTENDANCE

1. Members Present

Mr. Richard Licht, Chair	Director, RI Department of Administration
Ms. Kelly Mahoney, Vice Chair	Policy Director, Office of the Governor
Mr. Kevin Flynn, Secretary	Associate Director, Division of Planning
Ms. Jeanne Boyle	President's Designee, RILOCAT
Ms. Jeanne Cola	Chair, RI Housing Resources Commission
Mr. Roy Coulombe	Public Member
Ms. Sharon Conard-Wells	West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation
Mr. Ruben Flores-Marzan	Providence Department of Planning & Development
Mr. Richard Godfrey	Executive Director, Rhode Island Housing
Mr. Scott Millar	Representing Ms. Janet Coit, Director, RIDEM
Mr. Thomas Mullaney	RI Department of Administration, Budget Office
Ms. Anna Prager	Public Member
Mr. Peder Schaefer	Representing Mr. Dan Beardsley, RILOCT, Executive Director
Mr. Robert Shawver	Representing Mr. Michael Lewis, Director, RIDOT
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Representing Mr. Stephen Cardi, Cardi Corporation
Mr. Mark Therrien	Representing Mr. Raymond Studley, RIPTA
Mr. John Trevor	Environmental Advocate
Dr. Robert Vanderslice	Representing Dr. Michael Fine, RI Department of Health
Mr. Michael Walker	Representing Mr. Marcel Valois, RI Economic Development Corporation
Mr. Scott Wolf	Environmental Advocate

2. Members Absent

Ms. Marion Gold	Executive Director, RI Office of Energy Resources
Mr. L. Vincent Murray	RI LOCAT, Government Official Representative
Mr. Sam Shamoon	Governor's Designee
Ms. Janet White-Raymond	Public Member

3. Guests

Mr. Carlos Machado

Federal Highway Administration

4. Staff – Division of Planning

Ms. Linsey Callaghan

Supervising Planner, Statewide Planning Program

Mr. Vincent Flood

Supervising Planner, Statewide Planning Program

Ms. Karen Scott

Assistant Chief, Statewide Planning Program

Mr. Jared Rhodes

Chief, Statewide Planning Program

Ms. Dawn Vittorioso

Executive Assistant, Division of Planning

Mr. Shane White

Supervising GIS Specialist, Statewide Planning

II. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Mahoney called the meeting to order on November 7, 2013 at 9:07 a.m. and said that Chairman Licht would be late.

2. Approval of the August 8, 2013 Meeting Minutes – *for vote*

Ms. Mahoney asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 8, 2013. Mr. Trevor moved to approve the minutes of August 8, 2013 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Flores-Marzan. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There were none.

4. Draft RI State Rail Plan, Authorization to Conduct Public Hearing – *for action*

Ms. Mahoney introduced Ms. Scott who delivered an informational PowerPoint presentation (attachment 1). Having concluded the formal presentation, the Council engaged in the following discussion:

Mr. Godfrey said that he attended several public meetings for the Providence Street Car project and pointed out that Providence property owners were concerned about the finance mechanisms and opposed the project. He said that the meetings were extremely controversial at times. Given that, Mr. Godfrey asked how potential protests would be handled in the State Rail Plan. Mr. Licht indicated that the Providence Street Car project was driven by the City of Providence. He noted that the Providence Administration applied for a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant; however, the State's Administration was in support of another project under the TIGER grant program. Mr. Flynn said that the Providence Street Car's funding mechanism is still not determined at this time and that hurt their TIGER grant application from being selected for federal funding. Mr. Marzan expressed his

support for the Providence Street Car project and stated that the stakeholders will need to meet to discuss the issues on hand. Mr. Rhodes added that the project is currently part of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with \$1.5M to advance the design; which is necessary as it will allow the state to obtain actual project construction costs. Mr. Therrien said that the Street Car project cannot enter into the engineering and design phases at this point because all of the funding has not been identified for design. Mr. Wolf said that the Street Car project should not be viewed solely as a transportation project. He said that the project is an economic development/revitalization project and therefore, we should look beyond the transportation component and try and capture the larger economic benefits.

Mr. Walker stated that if the Providence Street Car project it is not in the plan, then it would not be found consistent with the State's long term planning and it would be ineligible for funding regardless of whether it passed the merits or not; excluding it would end the project's federal funding eligibility. Mr. Walker said by including the project in the plan, it does not assure that the project will move forward, but it later provide an opportunity for the discussion to continue. In response, Mr. Licht addressed said that it is essential for Downtown Providence to have some sort of transportation solution; whether it is a fixed route system or a mobile system. Mr. Godfrey noted that he supports the Street Car Project; however, he stated that once the project is in the final engineering design stages, he predicts a lively debate from the public wanting answers as to how the project will be financed. Mr. Licht referred to Mr. Walker's earlier explanation and said keeping the project listed in the plan will allow it the opportunity to have further discussions.

Ms. Mahoney referred to Table 9-1, Passenger and Freight Rail Needs Assessment and questioned if the projects were listed in priority order. Ms. Scott said that they were not.

Mr. Licht said that some of the goals, policies and objectives overlap one another and suggested reviewing the section to ensure the distinctions are different. Next, he asked if the Providence & Worcester Railroad would be contributing towards the cost of repairing bridges over the Blackstone River. Ms. Scott said that the Providence & Worcester Railroad and Massachusetts Department of Transportation understands the shared responsibility and attempted to apply for a TIGER Grant with the support of RIDOT but the application was not selected for funding.

Mr. Licht, next, questioned the 1% goal increase in commuter rail ridership. Ms. Scott said that she would review it once again and will be more aggressive. Mr. Wolf also questioned whether the 1% goal was enough for the system to become sustainable.

Mr. Wolf suggested looking at the project and percentage to determine if it's enough to list it as a sustainable system and determine if it is realistic for the system to continue for decades. Mr. Licht suggested reviewing the Wickford Station's ridership goals and then expressed his opinion and said the long range future for economic development is to have strong commuter rail.

Mr. Vanderslice asked to keep health benefits in mind as the State Rail plan moves into the final stage. He then asked why sea level rise was not included in the document. In response, Ms. Scott said that there is a specific action item to identify impacts to rail infrastructure from climate change and sea level rise. She noted that this information will be included in the environmental impact section. Mr. Licht pointed out

Statewide Planning's efforts on climate change and noted that a presentation will be provided to the Council in the near future, which includes maps and the effects of sea level rise to transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Schaefer asked about Rhode Island's relationship with Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and questioned RI's position if MBTA refused to stop at the Pawtucket station. Mr. Shawver noted that the impacts would need to be identified and negotiations would need to be made for them to stop and pointed out that RI cannot force MBTA to have an additional stop. He pointed out that Providence is one of MBTA's highest utilized stations throughout the commuter rail system.

Mr. Licht asked if the plan mentioned a possible commuter rail station stop in Cranston. Mr. Flynn said yes, it is included in the plan. Next, Mr. Licht said that there have been discussions about establishing shuttle service provided by the state where service would continue every fifteen minutes from Providence to Wickford or Providence to Warwick. Ms. Scott said that there is a detailed section in the plan that discusses the potential shuttle service. Mr. Shawver added that more frequent service from Providence to Warwick appears to be feasible. However, because of the shortage of track time, rail service frequency cannot be increased to the Wickford Station.

Mr. Wolf asked if RI is still providing storage for MBTA commuter rail cars in Pawtucket. Mr. Licht said yes, and stated that is a layover and maintenance facility. Mr. Wolf asked if this provides RI with any leverage for added service. Mr. Licht said he doesn't know the specifics of the pilgrim partnership contract that outlines MBTA servicing RI. Mr. Shawver indicated that it may.

Mr. Boyle asked if the plan included the possibility of extending commuter rail to the East Bay. Ms. Scott said that it was not listed in the plan as a project at the current time.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Licht asked for a motion to authorize the holding of a public hearing on the draft Rhode Island State Rail Plan. Mr. Walker moved and Mr. Flores-Marzan seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. FY 2014 Unified Transportation Planning Work Program, Proposed Amendment 1 – *for action*

Next, Mr. Licht introduced Mr. Flood who began explaining that the United States Geological Survey (USGS) notified the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) Coordinator of an opportunity to increase the scope and funding for a project that the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is planning. The existing DHS project is to fly the Providence Urban Area (UA) to acquire 0.30-meter digital orthophotography in Spring 2014 with an approximate delivery in December 2014. This imagery would be consistent with the most recent statewide orthophotography, which was done in Spring 2011. The aerials would be available on Rhode Island's Geographic Information System (RIGIS) database for all State and local Planners to utilize. This updated imagery would be instrumental for such things as:

- Climate change efforts, including transportation infrastructure sea level rise vulnerability mapping;
- Highway functional classification revisions;
- Travel demand modeling efforts;

- Land use planning; and
- Routine work conducted by RIDOT including: base mapping for infrastructure inventory projects and maintenance and repair scheduling.

The USGS has offered the state the opportunity to purchase 0.30-meter pixel 4-band imagery statewide to fill in areas outside the Providence UA and higher-resolution 0.15-meter pixel size in Providence, Warwick, Cranston, Pawtucket, and Central Falls at a discounted price. Mr. Flood explained that the \$54,000 purchase would be comprised of \$43,200 (80%) in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Metropolitan Planning Funds and \$10,800 (20%) in state funds, which will be supplied by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. In concluding, Mr. Flood noted that this opportunity was offered following the Work Program's adoption; therefore, the Work Program will require an amendment.

There being no questions or comments, Mr. Licht asked for a motion to amend task 5020 from Section 3 and Table 4-1 of the approved FY 14 Unified Transportation Planning Work Program to incorporate this effort. Mr. Godfrey moved and Mr. Flores-Marzan seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. 2014 Committee Appointment "Slate of Names" – *for discussion*

Next, Mr. Licht introduced Mr. Rhodes who began by reminding the Council that various memberships to their Technical Committee and Transportation Advisory Committee would soon be expiring. He then introduced the proposed "Slate of Names" for 2013 appointments distributed in the Council's meeting packets. Mr. Rhodes said that there has been an amendment since the meeting packets were mailed and explained that Meredith Brady will replace Mr. Shawver who represented the RIDOT on the Transportation Advisory Committee. In concluding, he explained that the item was for introductory purposes only and that a vote on the proposed "Slate of Names" would be docketed for the Council's next meeting following a minimum one month long consideration period.

There being no questions or comments, Mr. Licht moved to the next agenda item.

7. Proposed 2014 Meeting Schedule – *for discussion*

Mr. Rhodes presented the proposed 2014 meeting schedule for informational purposes and asked the Council to review it prior to next month's meeting as it will be on the agenda for action. Mr. Rhodes noted that all the meetings are on the 2nd Thursday of the month.

There being no questions or comments, Mr. Licht thanked Mr. Rhodes and moved to the next item on the agenda.

8. Associate Director's Report – *for discussion*

Mr. Flynn addressed the following items under the Associate Director's report:

- RhodeMap RI Workshops;
- Rhode Island Foundation & Rhode Island Economic Development Workshops;
- RI Solid Waste Plan update;
- Wetlands Taskforce;
- Climate Change Leaders' Summit;
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funding update;
- Legislative update;
- Staffing update.

9. Other Business – *for discussion*

There was none.

10. Adjourn

There being no further discussion Council member Walker motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council member Shawver and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:14 a.m.

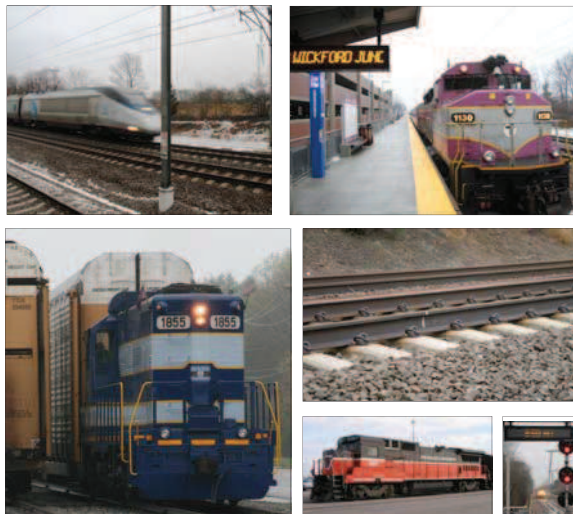
Respectfully Submitted,



Kevin Flynn
Secretary

Attachment 1

Rhode Island State Rail Plan State Guide Plan Element 661



Draft Review
October 30, 2013

Federal Mandate - PRIIA

Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA)

Requires State Rail Plans to Include the Following:

- Identification of rail infrastructure issues
- Review and inventory of all rail lines in the state and analysis of rail within multimodal environment
- Statewide of state's passenger rail service objectives and framework for implementation of initiatives
- Statement of public financing for rail projects and service in the state



Previous State Rail Plan

**Rhode Island
State Rail
Plan
1990**

**Rhode Island
State Freight
Plan
1993**

- Both primarily focused on freight rail and not passenger.
- Do not meet new federal state rail plan requirements

State Rail Plan Advisory Committee

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program (RISPP)	Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC)
Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT)	Providence & Worcester Railroad
Amtrak	Quonset Development Corporation (QDC) & the Seaview Railroad
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)	Rhode Island Railroad Association
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Two of Rhode Island's regional planning agencies
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Two of the neighboring Massachusetts metropolitan planning organizations
Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
Rhode Island Office of the Governor	Other Interested Agencies and Individuals Participated

USDOT - MAP-21 Goals

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21)

- **Safety** - Significantly reduce transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries.
- **Infrastructure Condition** - Maintain transportation infrastructure in a state of good repair.
- **System Reliability** - Improve the efficiency of the transportation system.
- **Congestion Reduction** - Significantly reduce congestion on the NHS.
- **Freight Movements & Economic Vitality** – Improve national freight network, strengthen rural communities ability to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
- **Environmental Sustainability** – Enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

Components of State Rail Plan

- 1 – Introduction
 - 2 – Development of the State Rail Plan
 - 3 – Public Rail Program Activities in Rhode Island
 - 4 – Rhode Island's Freight Rail System
 - 5 – Rail Passenger Service in Rhode Island
 - 6 – Proposed Passenger Rail Service
 - 7 – Analysis of Rail Transportation Impacts
 - 8 – Rail Safety and Security
 - 9 – Goals, Objectives, Policies, Implementation Actions
 - 10 – Rhode Island Rail Investment Program
- Appendix – Inventory of Rhode Island's Rail Lines

Rail Vision Statement

The Rhode Island rail system provides safe, reliable, efficient, and effective mobility for people and goods. It contributes to a more balanced transportation system, contributes to economic development, and enhances environmental quality. It efficiently links Rhode Island passengers and goods to national and global markets to cost effectively meet freight and passenger market demands.

Goals for the Rail System

Safety & Security - Will be a safe and secure means of transporting people and goods.

Infrastructure Condition - Will efficiently serve the long-term needs of Rhode Island businesses and residents.

System Reliability - Will provide for the effective and efficient mobility of goods and people as an element of an integrated multi-modal transportation system.

Congestion Reduction - Will provide a vital transportation mode that accommodates travel and commerce and reduces congestion within the overall transportation system.

Economic Vitality – 1) Will support a vigorous economy by facilitation the movement of people and freight within Rhode Island and the region. 2) Maintain a well-integrated and sustainable rail system that operates as an internal and coordinated component of the multimodal transportation system and has the supporting land use designations that provide access to intermodal facilities and to compact, mixed-use centers to accommodate Rhode Island's growing population and economy.

Environmental Sustainability - Will protect and enhance the quality of the State's environmental resources and the livability of its communities through well-designed rail projects and operations.

Project Evaluation Process

Safety & Security – corrects a safety or security problem, improves highway rail crossing safety, contributes to passenger or rail employee safety

Infrastructure Condition - rail system preservation, impacts on operating and maintenance costs, improves user comfort

System Reliability – connectivity to national/regional rail network, operational improvements, multimodal service alternatives, decreases overall transit time, attracts new riders

Congestion Reduction - relieves congestion, increases capacity, reduces VMTs

Economic Vitality – enterprise zone, job creation, tax revenue, spurs new investment, encourages TOD development, increases carloads of freight handled

Environmental Sustainability – improves air quality, minimizes environmental and social impacts, supports environmental justice populations

Financial Feasibility and Public Support– cost-effectiveness, cost sharing, funding available, public support, right of way availability, State Guide Plan consistency, local comprehensive plan consistency

Project Evaluation Process

Planning Level Analysis– Projects in conceptual development and need significant analysis and detail to ascertain whether the project is feasible from a financial, ridership, geographical or operational standpoint. Projects in this phase are not guaranteed to advance into construction.

Preliminary Engineering/Environmental Analysis - Projects are further advancing previous planning analysis into conceptual design, up to 30% engineering plans. This phase includes NEPA approval. Projects in this phase are not guaranteed to advance into construction.

Final Engineering Design– These projects advance from 30% engineering to 100% engineering plans. During this phase, projects will complete all required permitting, have full cost estimates, and be ready for advertising to advance to construction.

Construction- Physical construction of the project.

Short Range Investment Program

Timeframe – Project phase is underway or is expected to get underway within the next 0-5 years.

Projects - 19 freight and passenger projects are scheduled to advance.

Project Description – Brief overview of the projects

Project Benefits - Brief overview of the project benefits.

Phase Priority - High or low

Phase Estimated Cost - \$110.21 in proposed projects

Potential Funding Sources - federal, state, local, grants, and TBD

Example Projects

- Providence Station & Tunnel Configurations Improvements (PE/EA)
- 3rd Track Capacity – TF Green to Kingston (PLA)
- Commuter Rail Expansion South of Providence (PLA)
- Replacement of 5 bridges over the Blackstone River (FED & C)

Long Range Investment Program

Timeframe – Project phase is expected to get underway within the next 6-20 years.

Projects - 6 freight and passenger projects are scheduled to advance.

Project Description – Brief overview of the projects

Project Benefits - Brief overview of the project benefits.




Phase Priority - High or low

Phase Estimated Cost - \$\$\$

Potential Funding Sources - federal, state, local, grants, and TBD.

Example Projects

- Passenger service from Woonsocket to Pawtucket/Providence (PLA)
- Vertical Clearance restrictions between Pawtucket and Quonset (PE/EA)

State Rail Plan Next Steps			
<p>Request Authorization of Public Hearing</p> <p>TAC Oct. 30, 2013 TC Nov. 1, 2013 SPC Nov. 7, 2013</p> 	<p>Public Hearing Tentative</p> <p>Jan. 23, 2014 Daytime TAC Meeting</p> 	<p>Public Hearing Report & Updated Final Plan</p> <p>TC Feb. 7, 2014 SPC Feb.13, 2014</p> 	<p>Submission to FRA</p> <p>Feb. 20, 2014</p> 